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LETTER DATED 10 MARCH 1999 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ERITREA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to forward to you a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Eritrea today, 10 March 1999 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Haile MENKERIOS
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Statement issued on 10 March 1999 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Eritrea

The Ethiopian Government is, under the pretext that it has grave doubts about the Government of Eritrea's acceptance of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) Framework Agreement, feverishly preparing for a new aggression against Eritrea. This is contrary to the provisions of the Framework Agreement and the relevant Security Council resolutions endorsing the Framework Agreement and is meant to achieve other political and military objectives. It is therefore manifestly clear now that the Ethiopian Government is violating the provisions of the Framework Agreement and creating obstacles to the peaceful resolution of the conflict.

The Eritrean Government therefore wishes to clarify, without leaving any room for doubt, its position on the basic contents of the Framework Agreement, if only because Ethiopia is, by its prevarications and allegations, sowing confusion on the matter.

1. Eritrea has always been committed, and remains unequivocally committed, to ceasefire and immediate cessation of hostilities. Ethiopia has been consistent in its rejection of both a ceasefire and cessation of hostilities.

2. Eritrean troops have, since 27 February 1999, been redeployed from Badme and its environs which are currently occupied by Ethiopia.

3. Eritrea is ready to implement redeployment in "all other contested areas along the common border within the framework of demilitarization of the entire common border" and accepts the supervision of the demilitarization process by a group of military observers as provided for in article 5 (a) and (b) of the Framework Agreement.

The fact that the Eritrean government has created a follow-up committee to determine the modalities for the implementation of the Framework Agreement is a mark of the sincerity of its commitments. The Follow-up Committee awaits the call of the OAU High-level Delegation to begin its work as provided for in article 9 (a) and (b) of the Framework Agreement.